

Post-9/11 International Artist Exchanges Between the United States and the Middle East

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Since 9/11, the U.S. government has gradually increased its budget for cultural exchange to improve its estranged relationship with Middle Eastern¹ countries. However, U.S. private foundations have been reluctant to sponsor international artist exchanges with the region. This article describes the funding trends of both public and private sources; explains the consequences and coping strategies of U.S. arts presenters through a case study of the Kennedy Center's 2009 *Arabesque Festival*; and examines the effects of the new laws and regulations created after the terrorist attacks that seem to be influencing the activities of private funders.

Keywords *artist exchanges, cultural diplomacy, funding trends, legal environment, Middle East*

INTRODUCTION: FUNDING SHIFTS IN U.S. HISTORY

Since the nineteenth century, culture has played an important role in international relations, both to build mutual trust and to promote a country's values and heritage in other nations (Mulcahy 1999). Today, however, the concept of "cultural diplomacy" has put more emphasis on mutual understanding through building relations than on a nation's story and projecting its image. Political scientist Milton C. Cummings (2003, 1) defines cultural diplomacy as "the exchange of ideas, information, art[s], and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding." In fact, since a people's culture reflects its society, cultural diplomacy encompasses a broad range of fields, beyond the arts, that include education, sports, science, and even the economy (Institute for Cultural Diplomacy 2007).

Compared to major European nations, the United States began only recently to practice cultural diplomacy in its foreign relations. In 1938, the Division of Cultural Relations was established under the U.S. Department of State to project its image through music, art, literature, and other intellectual and cultural attainments (Brown 2006). Despite the historical lack of arts exchange in U.S. foreign policy, President Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership in arts diplomacy received recognition. During the Eisenhower administration, the 83rd Congress approved the President's \$5 million request for stimulating American cultural activities abroad. The President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs was subsequently allocated to the Department of Commerce, the Department of State, and the United States Information Agency (USIA). Of the Fund's \$5 million

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total, \$2,407,000 was granted to the State Department and USIA—“the State Department received \$2,250,000 for presentations of American dance, theater, music, and sports aboard; [and the USIA obtained] \$157,000 to help publicize performing arts and sports events” (Prevots 1998, 11).

President Eisenhower’s leadership ushered in an era of healthy budgets for exchange programs, and subsequently, the Kennedy Administration made an effort to reinforce U.S. cultural diplomacy by establishing the Peace Corps (Glade 2009). Evidently, many acknowledge the Cold War period as a time when cultural exchanges flourished and were funded both publicly and by private foundations. However, with the end of the Cold War, budgets for cultural diplomacy declined sharply under the mistaken belief that they were no longer needed. Representatively, the USIA’s budget dropped by 33% by the late 1990s and then, in October 1999, the agency was merged into the State Department (Sablosky 2003). Concurrently, the USIA closed many of its Information Resource Centers and Libraries, thus reducing contact points between the foreign public and U.S. representatives. Instead, State Department funds were needed to address the unanticipated necessity of building twenty new embassies in the former Soviet bloc nations that were newly liberated. These new facilities seldom had sufficient money or staff to run culturally engaging programs to build new contacts and enhance relations (Ayers 2010).

The downsizing trend faced another turn in 2001; the 9/11 terrorist attacks acted as an alarm regarding the consequences of neglecting cultural diplomacy after the Cold War. As a result, the U.S. government began to revive its cultural diplomacy efforts in order to improve its strained relations with the Middle East and restore its national image. However, it was not until 2009 that President Obama, in his Cairo speech, acknowledged that military power alone could not solve existing problems in the region, nor improve diplomatic relations (The White House 2009). Additionally, senior U.S. government officials have more precisely endorsed people-to-people exchanges to foster mutual understanding and respect between nations, and even to enhance national security and economic competitiveness (U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy 2010). Despite government leaders’ recognition, budgets for cultural exchange have not yet fully recovered from the USIA budget cuts (Americans for the Arts 2009; U.S. Department of State 2012).

Although funding remained at a modest level, the State Department’s budget for Educational and Cultural Exchange programs increased from \$245 million to \$635 million over the FY 2003 to FY 2010 period. In contrast, during the equivalent time period, foundations have been reluctant to sponsor international arts and cultural exchange programs with Middle Eastern countries (Shin 2009; U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy 2010). Unlike the *de facto* complementarity of both public and private funders to invest in international cultural exchanges involving the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in the post-9/11 environment, private funders have been less inclined to support programs engaged with the Middle East. What explains the different approaches of public and private funding? More specifically, what circumstances and considerations have served to discourage private philanthropy from supporting cultural exchanges with a key region of U.S. concern after 9/11? Among many possibilities, Olga Garay, former program director for the arts at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, points out “political changes at the macro level” as a forceful factor which can impact the philanthropic community at large (Szántó 2003, 21).

If political agenda or government policy can impact philanthropic activities, including funding cultural exchanges, policymakers also share the responsibility of encouraging private funders to proactively adjust to new shifts led by their policy decisions. Within this context, this study will shed light on how private foundations may have reacted to the government’s new policy—for

instance, the *Anti-Terrorist Financing Guidelines*—in funding international artist exchange programs with the Middle East. Although focusing on artist exchanges with the region is quite cumbersome, people-to-people contacts deserve more attention considering the value and positive impact of artist exchanges on our global society.

In sum, this article studies funding trends and the environment of international artist exchange programs between the United States and the Middle East after September 11, 2001, which brought a renewed interest in U.S. cultural diplomacy. To study the funding trends on artist exchanges between the U.S. and the Middle East, I analyzed the Foundation Center’s “International Grant-making” series² and the U.S. Department of State budgets from FY 2001 to FY 2012. The research on funding trends confirms reports that only limited funding has been devoted to supporting international artist exchanges. Moreover, there have been even fewer grants primarily dedicated to sponsoring such programs with the Middle East. However, the specific scope of this study makes it difficult to identify research sources regarding the exact number of grants and funding figures that support artist exchange programs. In order to scrutinize the subject through both a practical and substantive lens, the Kennedy Center’s *Arabesque Festival: Arts of the Arab World* is examined next. Here, interviews were conducted to supplement the limited research data available. The *Arabesque Festival* allows a glimpse into the fundraising efforts in the current funding climate for international giving.

FUNDING ANALYSIS: CURRENT TRENDS IN U.S. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SUPPORT

To observe the recent public funding trends, this research analyzes the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) budgets. With a focus on the budgets of the Educational and Cultural Exchange (ECE) programs and the Professional and Cultural Exchanges (Cultural Exchanges) program,³ this examination provides insight into the funding trends for arts exchange programs.

In Table 1, the changes in both ECE and Cultural Exchanges budgets show funding shifts over the period of FY 2001 to FY 2012. First, the sharp rise and fall in the ECE program budget draws our attention. The ECE budget allocation increased 5.9 percent in 2002, then decreased 1.3 percent in 2003; however, starting in FY 2004, it began to make a fast recovery. The drastic changes reflect the unstable socio-political circumstances of the time brought by the aircraft hijacking on 9/11, for instance, re-prioritizing public policy agenda. The most meaningful budget allocation for artist exchanges appears in Cultural Exchanges budgets around the same period. As shown in Table 1, while ECE programs received less funding in FY 2003 than they did in FY 2002, the Cultural Exchanges 2003 budget continued to increase at close to the same rate as in FY 2002. Similarly, a fair slice of the increasing FY 2010 ECE budget was directed to the Cultural Exchanges program. Overall, it is evident that a significant part of the total ECE budget increase went to the Cultural Exchanges program, albeit inconsistently. All of these changes in budget allocations suggest that, in the short-term perspective, the U.S. State Department was hesitant to continue supporting cultural exchanges, probably because of its instantly increasing demands on national security right after 9/11. On the other hand, the unparalleled budget allocations between the ECE and Cultural Exchanges program prove that the State Department recognized the importance of developing direct contacts with the local public in conflict areas.

TABLE 1
Shifts in U.S. Public Funding for the International Artist Exchange^a

	The US Department of State's ECA			
	Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)		Professional and Cultural Exchanges*	
	Nominal	Changes	Nominal	Changes
FY 2000 Actual	\$204,155	—	\$60,616	—
FY 2001 Actual	\$233,242	14.2%	\$69,903	15.3%
FY 2002 Actual	\$247,000	5.9%	\$74,421	6.5%
FY 2003 Actual	\$243,712	-1.3%	\$78,874	6.0%
FY 2004 Actual	\$316,633	30%	\$99,756	26.5%
FY 2006 Actual	\$431,275	21.2%	\$143,421	21.1%
FY 2007 Actual	\$465,671	8.0%	\$150,153	4.7%
FY 2008 Actual	\$501,347	7.7%	\$160,413	6.8%
FY 2009 Actual	\$538,000	7.3%	\$168,251	4.9%
FY 2010 Actual	\$635,000	18.0%	\$209,618	24.6%
FY 2011 Actual	\$599,500	-5.6%	\$197,631	-5.7%
FY 2012 Estimate	\$583,200	-2.7%	\$193,964	-1.9%

Source: U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/c6112.htm>

*A line item under ECE budget.

^aDollars presented in thousands.

While public funding is gradually recovering Cold-War-era levels, private foundations have not exhibited a similar recovery. Instead, only a limited number of foundations took the initiative of sponsoring mutual understanding and dialogues between the U.S. and Middle Eastern countries, even after the terrorist attacks. More striking is the fact that recent efforts to reconcile estranged relationships are not necessarily made through the arts. According to the Foundation Center's proceedings (2004; 2008), U.S. foundations' giving to "international affairs" in the Middle East more than doubled from 6 percent in 2002 to 13.8 percent in 2006; and its ranking of grant distribution among six major program areas⁴ jumped from fifth place to third during the same period. For "arts and culture," on the contrary, the foundations did not grant a comparable amount at all to the same region, which recorded 6.7 percent in 2006. It is also noteworthy that "arts and culture" ranked at the bottom of the six major program categories in both 2002 and 2006. Schneider and Nelson (2008, 29) are also concerned about the present state by noting that "[f]or international artist programs and exchanges, the number of donors narrows even further." Accordingly, a short list of prominent contributors to cultural exchanges includes the following: the Ford Foundation; the Open Society Institute (OSI); the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Arts; the One Nation Foundation; the Rockefeller Brothers Fund; the Skoll Foundation; and the Rockefeller Foundation. Notably, OSI recently moved its regional focus from Central and Eastern Europe to the Middle East (Open Society Institute 2009; Schneider and Nelson 2008).

Despite these initiatives, the majority of the American philanthropic community has kept its distance from sponsoring cultural exchanges with the Middle East. After 2002, while most regions received greater amounts in direct grants from U.S. foundations, the Middle East was one of the exceptions to this international giving trend. Between 2002 and 2006, overseas giving to

the region shows a decrease from 6.1 percent to 3.2 percent. In terms of regional ranking among eight regions⁵ total, the Middle East ranks sixth, followed by Canada and the Caribbean. On the other hand, the amount of giving through U.S.-based organizations to the Middle East ranks in third place out of eight during the period of 2002 through 2006. Although its ranking remained consistent, the percentage of total giving through U.S.-based organization to the region shows a slight increase from 10.1 percent in 2002 to 11.3 percent in 2006 (The Foundation Center 2004; 2008).

These trends lead to two sets of questions. One focuses on U.S. arts presenters coping with the meager foundation support when seeking to introduce Middle Eastern artists to the American public. The second set of questions concerns understanding the possible reasons behind the divergent trend of private funding for cultural diplomacy that targets the Middle East. In this regard, observing the case of an artist exchange program will help us gain a fuller perspective on the issue. Therefore, this article examines the John F. Kennedy Center's *Arabesque Festival* in 2009. The case of the Kennedy Center illustrates the kinds of challenges that a leading performing arts center in the United States encountered and how it overcame them, particularly in the process of cultivating grants for an artist exchange program under unfavorable funding circumstances.

CASE STUDY: THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER'S *ARABESQUE* *FESTIVAL*

In 2009, the Kennedy Center held a three-week international arts event, the *Arabesque Festival: Arts of the Arab World* (the *Arabesque Festival*). The *Arabesque Festival* was an impressive artist exchange program, first for its enormous scale. It involved 800 Arab artists from twenty-two different nations that are members of the League of Arab States.⁶ The Kennedy Center has presented international festivals since 1997 and each festival was produced under the theme of a nation or region, such as Africa, China, Japan, and the Middle East. The series of festivals aims to provide the American public opportunities for “exploring the contemporary cultures of the world’s regions through music, dance, theater, film, fashion, food, and the visual arts” (U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy 2010, 18).

Indeed, the festival held in the U.S. capital city was a meaningful learning opportunity about Middle Eastern—precisely Arab—culture and people. The *Arabesque Festival* attempted to foster understanding of Middle Easterners as global citizens through the beauty and humanity in their arts and culture, instead of treating them only as political entities (Zongker 2009). To address this goal, the Kennedy Center made certain to present performances that contained authentic reflections of Arab cultures that were also artistically sophisticated. In addition, the range of the festival’s contents was fairly wide. The Arab artists at the festival represented varied traditional and contemporary arts, including adaptations of classical drama, cutting-edge dance, hip-hop, and the sound of the *oud*—an Arab stringed instrument.

This programming was aimed at educating people who were not familiar with Middle Eastern arts and culture, but it required five years of planning and three years of substantial preparation. According to David Kim, then manager of the Kennedy Center’s International Programming Department, the Kennedy Center also had to work closely with various partners to organize the event. The Center’s partners included the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of State and consulates from

throughout the Middle Eastern nations, their embassies in the United States, and the League of Arab States.

Collaborations with these entities helped facilitate the festival, especially in obtaining visas for participating artists. To bring Middle Eastern artists into this country, Kim said, “the Kennedy Center had to do a premium process for all of the visas” (Kim 2009); and a premium processing service costs \$1,255, in addition to the \$190 visa application processing fee and the \$325 filing fee for an I-129 petition for a non-immigrant worker (U.S. Department of State; USCIS).⁷ This amounts to a total visa processing fee of \$1,770 per person. With 800 artists requiring visas to participate in the Festival, this means the visa cost alone came to \$1.4 million.

To absorb these extraordinary costs, the Kennedy Center announced a \$10 million budget for the *Arabesque Festival*, which represented a large increase over the cost of the previous year’s Japan Festival, which had a budget of \$6 million. Kate Liberman, then Assistant Manager of the Kennedy Center’s Development Department, noted that this budget substantial actually was less than the original projected budget, which had been reduced in light of the economic downturn in 2008–2009. To raise the \$10 million funding, the Kennedy Center targeted large contributions, as distinct from smaller exchange programs that work with smaller budgets (Kim 2009).

The Kennedy Center’s grant solicitations were directed toward two different types of sources: international funding—specifically Middle-East-based corporations and foundations—and U.S. funding. Throughout the international funding development process, the Center found collaborating with governments, such as embassies and consulates, very critical. Interestingly, the foreign governments exhibited advantageousness in searching funding sources; not only were they great potential funders, but also “many of the corporations and foundations [in the Middle East have been] intertwined with the royal governments” (Liberman 2009). Accordingly, the list of international grantmakers for the festival included the UAE Embassy, the Kuwaiti Embassy, the Qatari Embassy, royal funding from Oman and Bahrain, and Saudi Aramco—the only corporate funder for the festival.

In turn, U.S. local foundations and corporations also sponsored the *Arabesque Festival*; however, many American funders, including corporations, renounced their initial intentions to support the festival because of the downward trending economy (Liberman 2009). Consequently, the Kennedy Center received grants from only two U.S. foundations, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art and the Ford Foundation. Despite the challenging economic environment, the Kennedy Center reached its fundraising goal of \$10 million, but U.S. and Middle Eastern contributions did not display the same level of interest and commitment. Rather, there is a large pool for giving to this type of program in Middle Eastern countries; in contrast, the Center found less interest among American funders.

... there are many funding sources for this type of work in [Middle Eastern] countries as they are very interested ... in creating partnerships with the United States. At the same time, I think that there are very few stateside [funding] organizations who are interested in this type of artistic partnership. [According to this,] I think that [U.S.] funding organizations are still learning about the significant role of cultural diplomacy (Liberman 2009).

Considering the Kennedy Center’s worldwide reputation and credibility, it is fair to conclude that not many mid-sized or small arts and cultural organizations could achieve the same level of success in raising such enormous amounts of funding. To note a couple of primary reasons, the Center has a history of working with many government agencies, both in the United States

and abroad, on previous international programs. Plus, many small or even mid-sized exchange programs are unable to afford the burdensome cost for premium processing of visiting artists' visas. They also may not have enough human resources to coordinate and work on filing all of the required documents simply to have international artists step onto U.S. soil to share their artistic talents and cultural value. Despite its atypically extensive resources and the sheer scale, both of which are far above average, this case study demonstrates common challenges that most arts presenters would encounter and also coping strategies for securing necessary financial resources.

NEW LAWS AND REGULATIONS CONSTRAINING PRIVATE FUNDING

The *Arabesque Festival* illustrates the U.S. private foundations' passive attitude in supporting international artist exchanges with the Middle East; in addition, the recent economic recession worsened the situation. Predating the economic crisis, however, changes in the political environment attendant to the end of the Cold War led the private sector to neglect cultural exchange programs. This trend appeared most vividly right after the terrorist attacks in 2001; coincidentally, it was also the time period when the new and cumbersome regulations for monitoring global giving were set up. In this regard, it is important to comprehend how the government's immediate reactions to the 9/11 attacks have affected the philanthropic community. Through his historical analysis of U.S. cultural diplomacy, Cummings (2003, 12) recognizes that the government's reactions can be counterproductive: "[the terrorist attacks,] America's response to this new challenge, and later, the war in Iraq raised a whole set of new issues relating to the U.S. government's cultural diplomacy, particularly its dealings with the Arab world."

As immediate reactions to the violent extremist attacks, the U.S. Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act (PATRIOT Act) and President George W. Bush issued Executive Order 13224. Following these actions, the U.S. Department of the Treasury released the *Anti-Terrorist Financing Guidelines: Voluntary Best Practices for U.S.-Based Charities*. The laws and guidelines were originally aimed at preventing the financing of terrorists through money laundering and the abuse of charitable organizations in the United States and worldwide. Another objective was to provide insight into grantmakers as well as beneficiaries that do not have any intention of financing terrorist organizations. However, the regulations inadvertently have been misguiding the relevant nonprofits, and this has provoked philanthropic specialists' and researchers' criticism for the ineffectiveness of the regulations in terms of practical operations. Some proclaim that U.S. counterterrorism laws hinder U.S.-based grantmakers' operations abroad. Even though the laws have achieved some success in stopping or preventing terrorism, they still have loopholes because they are "short-term solutions," particularly in the PATRIOT Act (Guinane et al. 2008). As a proper response to the criticism, U.S. legislators need to execute thorough and meticulous reviews on the current regulations and then restore the blind points that have impeded the private sector's efforts to reconcile the estranged relations through the arts.

In addition to the unforeseen loopholes, many philanthropists point out that those regulations are stricter than previous regulations and have affected the nonprofit sector at large (The Foundation Center 2004; 2008). Political scientist Nancy Billica also problematizes this issue by stating that "grantmakers are still making grants, but the process for doing so has been negatively altered" (2006, 12). Both reports univocally claim that the restrictions have slowed down the preparation of grant applications. Likewise, the illustrated legal circumstance convincingly explains why the

level of private foundations' support has lagged below the level of increases in public funding for international artist exchanges.

It is difficult to quantify how much Executive Order 13224,⁸ the USA PATRIOT Act,⁹ and the Anti-Terrorist Financing Guidelines¹⁰ unfavorably affect decisions regarding foundations' grant awards. However, there are reliable surveys and research which make the argument more solid. Those reports point out and blame such post-9/11 policies as a cause of chilling effects that the nonprofit organizations have been experiencing. According to the authors of *Collateral Damage: How the War on Terror Hurts Charities, Foundations and the People They Serve*, for example, the Department of the Treasury's guidelines affect both monetary and human resources in insufficient ways by pushing charitable organizations "to investigate people and business relationships of grantees beyond the scope of a philanthropic service" (Guinane et al. 2008, 5–6). Even worse, such difficult burdens are more pressing upon small-size foundations, given their limited budgetary resources to hire legal experts or to educate their employees. Most arts administrators would easily agree with Szántó (2003) that small foundations usually lack the staff and the expertise needed to comply with the requirements.

Also, a series of the Foundation Center's surveys conducted in 2002 and 2006¹¹ reaffirms the stranglehold of the new legal circumstances. With an aim of examining the internal and external factors of the U.S. international funding environment, the surveys found that the government's new regulations about direct overseas giving have been counted as a detrimental external factor by many U.S. foundations. In the 2002 survey, 78 percent of respondents indicated that an increasingly demanding and uncertain regulatory environment was a hurdle to fund overseas projects. Additionally, 68 percent of the survey participants agreed that "the international 'war on terrorism' makes funding overseas more difficult due to increased security risks abroad" (The Foundation Center 2004, 15). But those figures of 78 percent and 68 percent significantly decreased in the 2006 survey, though the drop may be influenced by the nuance and the way the question is worded. In the succeeding survey, 31 percent of the respondents agreed that "[t]he more demanding post-9/11 regulatory environment discourages giving to non-U.S.-based organizations" (The Foundation Center 2008, xiv). Although one may interpret the decline as U.S. grantmakers having become familiar with the regulations in their operations of giving overseas, it would be an over-simplification. In fact, the 31 percent still represents a considerable size of the American philanthropic community; furthermore, one must also acknowledge that if the 31 percent of respondents represents those foundations which support a particular region like the Middle East, there must be a serious issue that requires an ad hoc remedy.

CONCLUSION

The funding trends analysis in this article confirms that only limited funding resources have been devoted to sponsoring international artist exchanges; furthermore, for those programs engaged with the Middle East, funding resources appear to be even fewer, especially from U.S. private foundations as opposed to government funding. For its primary factor among others, this research indicated the new laws and regulations for overseas funding that were created by the Bush administration as an echo of the terrorist attacks. In that, what we must remember is that throughout the history of U.S. cultural diplomacy, the private sector has played an important role both in supporting and performing. Considering the central roles of the private grantmakers in international

artist exchanges, the new regulations need to be scrutinized and improved to encourage private funders in supporting the artist exchanges without procedural hardships.

Coincidentally, since the public sphere tends to demonstrate greater interest in sending Americans overseas, private funders had a stake in sponsoring those exchange programs which bring international artists onto U.S. soil. We can observe from the case study that the Kennedy Center collaborated with both U.S. federal agencies and foreign governments; yet it received financial support from outside the U.S., mainly from Middle Eastern governments. Considering the limited budget, this trend may reflect the U.S. government's higher preference for supporting American artists going overseas and telling American stories to foreign audiences, rather than sponsoring their counterparts' visits to the U.S. and listening to their stories.¹² The other side of the coin demonstrates that the foreign governments also wish to deliver their stories to the rest of the world. For that reason, the Middle Eastern governments may have become benefactors for the *Arabesque Festival*.

Further research is necessary to confirm the phenomenon that became apparent in the Kennedy Center's case. To prove that the government prefers to sponsor exchange programs by sending its stories out, one should look at the international tendency by asking how other nations usually support their cultural exchange programs, and in which direction—in or out—they fund more. Which government agency in different countries takes a leading role in cultural exchange efforts? Which country or government has been most actively engaged in sending their artists to America? Answers to these questions would help U.S. government policymakers to view the international trends of public support in international cultural exchanges and find its own effective strategy, both in the financial and legal systems.

With the government's return to cultural diplomacy, with much emphasis on relationship building with global citizens, the private sector's role has been growing more than ever. In addition to revising the new regulations, therefore, the U.S. government should initiate public-private partnerships, which would benefit from both the government's administrative capacity and private expertise of cultural exchanges in funding and programming. To ensure the success of U.S. cultural diplomacy, open discussions and constant communications are required, especially amongst people playing different roles in international artist exchanges—arts professionals, program administrators, grantmakers and scholars, to name a few. Furthermore, multiple channels need to be utilized to keep informing the arts and philanthropic communities about related policy changes and shifts in the national agenda, to ensure healthy and constant public-private partnerships (John Brademas Center 2009).

NOTES

1. The Middle East, or the greater Middle Eastern region, is frequently labeled with distinctive titles. For example, the State Department identifies the region as the "Near East," and "North Africa and the Middle East" is broadly utilized by the grant-related organization, the Foundation Center. Additionally, the term "Arab" refers to someone who uses the Arabic language and whose cultural background is Arabic. Thus, to promote consistency and to prevent unnecessary confusion, "the Middle East" will be utilized in this article.
2. Every four years, the Foundation Center publishes a report on international giving, based on the operations of approximately eight U.S. foundations. It should be noted that, according to the Foundation Center, promoting international understanding includes both international art exchanges and international student exchanges.

3. The ECE programs consist of Academic Programs, Professional and Cultural Exchanges, Program and Performances, and Exchanges Support. Among these five sub-programs under the ECE, Professional and Cultural Exchanges carries out cultural components and seems most qualified to be considered as artist exchanges. Therefore, to be consistent with the purpose of this research, the public funding analysis contains the Cultural Exchanges budget history along with the overall ECE budget trends.
4. The six major program areas consist of International Development & Relief; Education; International Affairs; Public Affairs/Social Benefit; Health; and Arts & Culture.
5. The lists of the eight regions are Western Europe; Asia & the Pacific; Latin America; Sub-Saharan Africa; Eastern Europe, Russia, & Independent States; North Africa & the Middle East (called the Middle East in this article); Canada; and Caribbean.
6. Its geographical location falls under the greater Middle East. The League of Arab States is comprised of twenty-two member nations, including Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
7. Type O (persons with extraordinary ability), P (athletes, artists & entertainers), and Q (international cultural exchange) visas are under the petition-based visa categories, which cost \$190 for the application process. Petition-based nonimmigrant visa applicants are also required to file an I-129 petition for a non-immigrant worker, and this filing fee is worth \$325. These costs are updated figures for this article. To estimate how much the Kennedy Center probably spent on visas for Arab artists, we can refer to Stephanie Evans's 2008 research about the process of U.S. visas for international cultural exchanges; it indicates that a premium processing service fee was \$1,000 and an I-129 petition filing fee was \$320 in 2008.
8. "Executive Order 13224" prohibits transactions with individuals and organizations deemed by the Executive Branch to be associated with terrorism, and allows the government to freeze all assets controlled by or in possession of these entities or those that support them (The Foundation Center 2008).
9. "The USA PATRIOT Act" imposes fines and terms of imprisonment for those who provide material support or resources knowing or intending that they are to be used in terrorist acts or by certain foreign terrorist organizations (The Foundation Center 2008).
10. *Voluntary Treasury Guidelines: Voluntary Best Practices for U.S.-Based Charities*, issued by the Treasury to aid nonprofits and grantmakers in complying with the Executive Order and the PATRIOT Act, contain suggested best practices for avoiding terrorist financing (The Foundation Center 2008).
11. In total, sixty-plus grantmakers completed the 2002 questionnaire and, for the 2006 survey, over seventy private and public foundations responded.
12. With regard to this, one may argue that in the U.S., a large number of immigrant populations represent and showcase diverse cultures. However, it should be acknowledged that such cultural representations made by U.S. residents are often compromised in two ways: Americanization and unprofessionalism, which are highly likely to be inauthentic and thus fail to represent the counterpart's genuine voice.

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